

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2939

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E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJ: UNDP COUNTRY PROGRAMMING EXERCISE

REF: A. STATE 64026; B. DACCA 1448

BEGIN SUMMARY: UNDP COUNTRY PROGRAM DOCUMENT CONTAINS ONLY BRIEF JUSTIFICATION OF SECTORAL NEEDS TO BE MET BY UNDP ASSISTANCE. USG COMMENTS INFORMAL OR OTHERWISE ON DRAFT DOCUMENT NOT SOLICITED. UNDP VARIETY STORE APPROACH ACROSS VIRTUALLY ALL SECTORS LACKS CLEAR SECTORAL CONCENTRATION. DISPERSION AND RESULTING DILUTION OF UNDP RESOURCES IS, IN OUR JUDGMENT, SIGNIFICANT DEFICIENCY OF PROGRAM DOCUMENT. AREAS OF POTENTIAL DUPLICATION HAVE IN SOME CASES BEEN IDENTIFIED, LEADING TO INCREASED UNDP-USG CONTACT. PROGRAMMING PROCESS EXCLUSIVELY CONDUCTED BETWEEN UNDP AND BDG, RESULTED IN LIST OF PROJECTS SOME OF WHICH POTENTIALLY CONFLICT WITH OTHER DONOR EFFORTS. CONTINUING USG CONTACT PLUS FUTURE EVALUATION OF PROJECTS BEING STARTED HOPEFULLY MAY LEAD TO NARROWING OF PROGRAM FOCUS WITH CHANCE OF MORE EFFECTIVE IMPACT. END SUMMARY.

1. REGRET DELAYED RESPONSE TO REF A. FOLLOWING IS MISSION COMMENT ON UNDP "COUNTRY AND INTERCOUNTRY PROGRAMMING" FOR BANGLADESH, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COPIES OF WHICH PREVIOUSLY POUCHED TO AID/ASIA/BD. ANSWERS BELOW

ARE KEYED TO NUMBERED PARAS, IN REF A. SEE ALSO PERTINENT COMMENTS TRANSMITTED EARLIER IN REF B.

2. PARA 1: SECTOR ANALYSIS IN UNDP COUNTRY BACKGROUND PAPER- COUNTRY PROGRAM DOCUMENT HAS ONLY BRIEF JUSTIFICATION OF SECTORAL NEEDS PROPOSED TO BE MET WITH UNDP ASSISTANCE. NO EVIDENCE APPARENT IN DOCUMENT NOR HAVE EARLIER CONVERSATIONS REVEALED THAT "SECTOR ANALYSIS" OR "SECTOR ASSESSMENT" (ACCORDING TO AID DEFINITION AND USAGE) HAS BEEN DONE PRIOR TO PROGRAMMING FOR AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY, POWER, ETC. DOCUMENT, HOWEVER, CITES (P. 6) IDENTIFICATION OF PROGRAM PRIORITIES BY VISITING TECHNICAL MISSIONS UNDER THE UN RELIEF PROGRAM IN 1972 AND 1973.

3. PARA 2: BILATERAL COMMENT ON COUNTRY PROGRAM-NEITHER USG NOR TO OUR KNOWLEDGE OTHER INTERESTED BILATERAL DONOR COMMENTS WERE SOUGHT ON DRAFT COUNTRY PROGRAM. THE UNDP RESREP DID INDICATE HE WOULD WELCOME INFORMAL COMMENT ON COMPLETED DOCUMENT AS REPORTED REF B BUT NO SPECIAL EFFORT WAS MADE BY RESREP TO PLAY EFFECTIVELY COORDINATING ROLE HE CLAIMS FOR HIS OFFICE. RESREP HAS BEEN QUITE SENSITIVE, PRESUMABLY IN PART DUE TO PERCEPTION OF HIS ROLE AS INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANT, ABOUT OUR INTEREST IN INFORMALLY EXCHANGING VIEWS DURING UNDP PLANNING AND PROJECT DESIGN PHASE. HIS RESPONSE TO OUR SUGGESTIONS IN PAST HAS BEEN THAT THIS EXCHANGE WOULD BEST START ONCE UNDP PROGRAM WAS DRAFTED, HENCE GIVING HIM A BASIS FOR DISCUSSION. THE MISSION RESPECTS HIS VIEWPOINT BUT FOR REASONS MENTIONED BELOW FEEL THIS ATTITUDE ON THE WHOLE HAS BEEN SHORT SIGHTED. THE FOLLOWING EXTRACT FROM PAGE 7 OF THE PROGRAM DOCUMENT SETS FORTH COORDINATION PLAN:

QUOTE: UNDP WILL ASSIST IN THE COORDINATING FUNCTION BY COLLECTING DATA ON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND ESTABLISHING AN INFORMATION CLEARING HOUSE. THE COORDINATION OF UN ASSISTANCE BY UNDP HAS BEEN ALREADY FULLY ACCEPTED AS A BASIC APPROACH TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT IN BANGLADESH. THE (BD) GOVERNMENT HAS UNDERTAKEN THE COORDINATION OF BILATERAL ASSISTANCE. END QUOTE. OUTSIDE OF SUPPOSED COORDINATION BY UNDP OF UN ASSISTANCE, LITTLE OF FOREGOING HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED.

4. PARA 3 (A): RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SECTORAL CONCENTRATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN-UNDP PROGRAM WILL BE BY FAR THE LARGEST TA EFFORT IN BANGLADESH. A ROUGH PARALLEL HAS THEREFORE BEEN ESTABLISHED IN COUNTRY PROGRAM BETWEEN ITS ALLOCATIONS AND CON- LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CENTRATIONS IN BANGLADESH FIVE-YEAR PLAN. HOWEVER, THE MIXED BAG OF 74 UNDP PROJECTS CUTS INTO ALL SECTORS WITHOUT ANY FIRM SENSE OF VALUE/PRIORITY. MOST THAT CAN BE SAID IS THAT BANGLADESH'S NEEDS ARE SO WIDESPREAD THE MERITS OF EACH PROJECT CAN PROBABLY BE SUPPORTED ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. FYI: MISSION UNDERSTANDS FINAL PROGRAM DOCUMENT RELEASED REFLECTS SLIGHTLY INCREASED CONCENTRATION OF TA RESOURCES IN AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AND POPULATION WHICH ARE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES MOST FREQUENTLY ARTICULATED BY

BDG, END FYI.

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5. PARA 3 (B): SIGNIFICANT DEFICIENCIES-SINCE ALL BASES ARE TOUCHED MORE OR LESS EQUALLY THERE AREN'T OBVIOUS OMISSIONS. QUESTION OF DISPERSION AND DILUTION OF RESOURCES, RATHER THAN PRIORITY CONCENTRATION, IN OUR JUDGMENT REQUIRES GREATEST ATTENTION, POSSIBLY LEADING TO ADJUSTMENTS IN PROGRAM CONTENT.

6. PARA 3 (C): AREAS OF DUPLICATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS-POTENTIAL AREAS OF DUPLICATION WITH USG AND OTHER DONOR ACTIVITIES WE ARE AWARE OF DO EXIST, PARTICULARLY IN AGRICULTURE. EXAMPLES IN AGRICULTURE: AG RESEARCH COUNCIL, RESEARCH WINTER CROPS, PLANT PROTECTION; IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT; PUBLIC WORKS PLANNING; IN POPULATION: UNFPA HAS LIST OF PROJECTS COVERING WATER FRONT, BUT WORLD BANK FOLLOWED WITH SIMILAR LIST OF PROPOSALS AND IDEAS. (AID BD DESK CAN PROVIDE SOME DETAILS FROM AVAILABLE USAID DOCUMENTATION.) THE COORDINATION EFFORT REQUIRED TO MAKE ALL THE DONOR PROGRAMS MESH HAS NOT BEEN MADE BY EITHER GOVERNMENT OR RESREP. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE EVIDENCE THAT THE BDG PROMOTES MULTIPLE INTEREST AND PROPOSALS TO ENSURE COVERAGE BY SOMEONE. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION ABOUT POTENTIAL DUPLICATION OF USG AND UNDP EFFORTS IN SPECIFIC CASES, RESREP IMPLIED OTHER DONORS SHOULD NOT BE CONCERNED ABOUT

THIS POSSIBILITY BECAUSE BDG RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS EVEN IN DEFINED
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ACTIVITIES ARE EXTENSIVE AND RESOLUTION WOULD TAKE MORE THAN WHAT
ONE DONOR CAN PROVIDE. ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, USAID IS AWARE OF
POSSIBLE DUPLICATION IN SOME AREAS TO THE CREDIT OF UNDP STAFF WITH
WHOM WE ENJOY VERY GOOD LIAISON. IN THOSE INSTANCES, DISCUSSIONS
WITH UNDP AND BDG ARE UNDERWAY.

7. PARA 3 (D): EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAMMING PROCESS- MISSION FEELING
THAT UNDP PROGRAMMING NOT PROPERLY EFFECTIVE SINCE THE PROCESS HAS
BEEN TIGHTLY HELD BETWEEN THE UNDP AND

THE BDG AND TO OUR VIEW HAS
RESULTED IN A SHOTGUN LIST OF PROJECTS POTENTIALLY CONFLICTING IN
MANY CASES WITH OTHER DONOR EFFORTS. EARLY INFORMAL CONSULTATION
WITH OTHER DONORS (AS WAS SUGGESTED BY USG IN PAST) PLUS A MORE
REALISTIC ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE TA ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY OF BANGLA-
DESH (IN TERMS OF COUNTERPART AND LOGISTIC SUPPORT) WOULD HAVE IN
OUR ESTIMATION TRIMMED THE PROJECT LIST CONSIDERABLY. FYI: RESREP
STATED RECENTLY THAT HE EXPECTS TO START INITIAL PROGRAMPLANNING
FOR NEXT IPF PERIOD BEGINNING JAN 1, 1977. EXPECTATIONS ARE THAT
IPF FOR NEXT PERIOD WILL BE \$60 MILLION AS COMPARED TO CURRENT \$18.5
MILLION INDICATING AN APPARENT LACK OF CONCERN FOR ABSORPTIVE
CAPACITY QUESTIONS. END FYI.

8. PARA 3 (E): EVALUATION OF MARGINAL ONGOING PROJECTS-ALTHOUGH
THE SPECIFIC STATUS OF RELATIVELY FEW ONGOING/APPROVED UNDP PRO-
JECTS IS NOT KNOWN, IT IS UNDOUBTEDLY STILL TOO EARLY TO PAVE A
MEANINGFUL EVALUATION AND/OR CULLING PROCESS BASED ON PROJECT
PERFORMANCE.

9. PARA 3 (F): SPECIAL PROBLEMS-IN SUM, WE FEEL THE UNDP PROGRAM
WILL HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF DIFFICULTY IN MEETING ITS TA PROJECT
TARGETS IN TERMS OF TIMING, PLACEMENT OF PERSONNEL, EXPENDITURES
AND GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENT. PROGRAM IS JUST GETTING STARTED AND DOES
NOT OPERATE IN A VACUUM. BELIEVE THAT WITH CONTINUING DISCUSSION
BY BILATERAL DONORS (AT FIELD AND HEADQUARTERS LEVELS) BOTH WITH
UNDP AND BDG, SHARPER FOCUS OF UNDP PROGRAM MAY BE ACHIEVED. AT
PRESENT, SOMEWHAT LIKE BANGLADESH FIVE-YEAR PLAN ITSELF, UNDP
COUNTRY PROGRAM IS UNEXCEPTIONABLE, ALL-INCLUSIVE LISTING OF TA
REQUIREMENTS WITHOUT ADEQUATE ANALYSIS OF IN-COUNTRY AND EXTERNAL
RESOURCES WHICH MIGHT FEASIBLY BE MOBILIZED AND COORDINATED TO
MEET THOSE NEEDS. ACTUAL EXPERIENCE OF IMPLEMENTATING INDIVIDUAL
PROJECTS COUPLED WITH ONGOING EVALUATIONS SHOULD ALSO CONTRIBUTE
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TO MOTIVATING UNDP TO CONVERT OVERALL PROGRAM INTO ONE OF NARROWER
FOCUS AND EFFECTIVE IMPACT WITHIN PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT SECTORS.
DECONTROL MAY 2, 1975
BOSTER

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